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THE MCA MONITOR

Volume I No. 2 December 1979

GOVERNOR PROCLAIMS S.O.B.E.R. HOLIDAY SEASON

Montana Governor Thomas L. Judge proclaimed the Thanksgiving through New Years Day Holiday Season as "S.O.B.E.R. Season" on November 16, 1979, in support of the "Slow On The Bottle, Enjoy The Road" drinking-driving awareness campaign sponsored by MCA under contract with the Highway Traffic Safety Division, Department of Community Affairs.

"Whereas, reducing deaths on Montana's highways is a major public concern and duty of state government; and

"Whereas, a major proportion of all Montana highway fatalities involve the use of alcohol by either the driver or the victim; and

"Whereas, the level of public awareness regarding alcoholic impairment of driving ability remains low in the face of increasing numbers of arrests for driving while intoxicated (DWI); and

"Whereas, the S.O.B.E. R. (Slow On The Bottle, Enjoy The Road) driver awareness campaign sponsored by the Montana Council on Alcoholism in cooperation with the Highway Traffic Safety Division, Department of Community Affairs, and the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division, Department of Institutions, has proven effective at increasing public awareness of the dangers of drinking and driving; and

"Whereas, intensive efforts are needed during the Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year Holiday Season, a time of increased highway traffic combined with high alcohol consumption, to reduce the number of drinking drivers on our highways,

"Now, Therefore, I, Thomas L. Judge, Governor of the State of Montana, proclaim the Thanksgiving through New Years Holiday Season as "S.O.B.E.R. Season" in an effort to foster increased public awareness of the problems of drinking and driving. Further, I personally urge all Montanans who drink this holiday season to do so responsibly. If you do drink, do not drive."

The number of Montana highway deaths this year is up dramatically from last year, with over half of those fatalities related to drinking, either by the victim or by the driver responsible. The holiday season takes a great annual toll when hazardous winter road conditions and the high traffic volume make an often fatal combination with drinking drivers returning from holiday festivities.

Governor Judge (LC) presents S.O.B.E.R. proclamation to MCA Exec. Jim Forsell. Also present are Al Goke, DCA (L) and Chick Canterbury, Dept. Institutions (R).

The campaign relies on radio and television spot announcements, bumper stickers, lapel pins, fliers and posters to attract and hold public attention, along with a variety of special projects planned and initiated by local campaign steering committees. A special S.O.B.E.R. component, "Alternative Action," has been developed for use in schools.

MCA staff have been working in Billings and Great Falls in recent months to establish steering committees and to mobilize community support for the campaign during the S.O.B.E.R. Season. The Lincoln County Council will be active with film showings and distribution of bumper stickers and pins at major stores in Libby, Troy and possibly Eureka.

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VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

MCA BOARD PRESIDENT: "DRAFTED"

MCA Board of Trustees President, Andrew J. Utick, was "drafted" into the Council as a volunteer following an organizational meeting held in October of 1977, at Jorgenson's Restaurant in Helena. Concerned Montana citizens, including the first MCA President, Boyd Andrew, were determined to maintain a separate identity for alcoholism treatment in Montana and had been in contact with the Washington State Council on Alcoholism since early 1976. Materials obtained from the Washington Council were distributed to individuals across Montana in preparation for the series of organizational meetings that followed.

Andy Utick suspects that he was recruited because he was a newly recovering alcoholic attorney. He attended the early organizational meetings with the idea of doing legal work for the Council. As MCA developed and as problems arose and were resolved, Andy's commitment to the Council deepened with his recognition of the widespread interest in and need for the Council.

A Los Angles native who moved to Montana at the age of three, Andy is an adopted Montanan. He earned his undergraduate degree in business administration from the University of Montana at Missoula in 1965, and his Juris Doctor Degree from U of M in 1969. He went immediately into private practice with a law firm in Helena and in June of 1977, opened his own law office. He is now senior partner of the Utick and Grosfield Law Firm. Utick is 36 years old.

"I was introduced to the martini and to regular drinking in law school," he says. "I drank martinis every day, practicing so I could hold my liquor as an attorney. Like other alcoholics I've talked to, I slipped into having a real problem with alcohol -- resulting in a crisis on St. Patrick's Day, 1977." Andy was hospitalized for nearly four days in Helena and after a week's search for an acceptable treatment program, entered the Eugene Eppley Chemical Dependency Unit in Omaha, associated with the Nebraska Methodist Hospital.

Andy remained at Eppley for "32 glorious and fun-filled days," before his return to Montana, where he has been sober ever since. "Life has never been more beautiful," he says. "We need more members -- more active members. It's the only way to spread the word. We must build public awareness about the disease of alcoholism and about the fact that help is available. I've been there - where I didn't think help was available - at the edge of complete despair. I remember how comforting it was to me to find there was help available."

LINCOLN COUNTY COUNCIL NOTES

The Lincoln County Council on Alcoholism plans to distribute a newsletter this month to update members who have been unable to attend meetings, according to President Michael J. Switzer of Libby. Switzer was uncertain as to whether publication would continue or end with a "one time shot."

The Lincoln Council initiated a fund-raising drive during hunting season by collecting hides for resale, Switzer said, which collected $55.00.

Switzer also noted that planning was underway for a public awareness seminar in Libby, under the director of Fr. John Wallace of Libby, sometime in early March. He said seminar participants would include representatives of business, industry, churches and recovering alcoholics. Switzer said that a number of pledges to support the event have been obtained from local organizations, and that more pledges were expected.

Lincoln Council support of the S.O.B.E.R. Campaign will include distribution of bumper stickers and buttons through major stores in Libby, Troy and probably Eureka as well. Switzer said plans include showing the film "Soft Is the Heart of a Child" in the three Lincoln County communities as soon as it becomes available.

MCA MONITOR is published by Montana Council on Alcoholism, a non-profit Corp. A.J. Utick-Pres., C.J. Christian-V.P., H.H. Bristow-Sec., R.W. Oaks-Treas., J.A. Forsell-Exec. Dir.

INTERNATIONAL A.A. CONVENTION COMING UP

The Monitor reminds our readers that the 45th Anniversary International A.A. Convention will be held July 3--6, 1980, in New Orleans, Louisiana. The convention will be centered in the New Orleans Superdome and is certain to be the biggest A.A. celebration in history.

Featured convention events include an opening Mardi Gras parade, a get-acquainted ball with local New Orleans jazz, and a wide variety of alkathons, workshops, panel discussions and special interest meetings. A special young people's "Crayfish Crawl" is planned at the Marriott Hotel. Alanon and Alateen events will be headquartered at the Hilton Hotel and Rivergate Convention Center.

The last international A.A. Convention was held in 1975 in Denver, Colorado.

For further information about the convention, contact your local A.A. central or intergroup office; A.A. General Service Office, P.O. Box 459, New York, N.Y. 10017; or MCA.

YOUTH WORKSHOP SCHEDULE ANNOUNCED

The Montana Council on Alcoholism is planning a three-day, 30-hour workshop relating to youth and alcoholism on January 29 - 31 in Billings.

The workshop will deal with the subject of intervention in family alcoholism problems for teachers and will also tell how to intergrate "Alternative Action" into daily coursework. "Alternative Action" is the school component of the S.O.B.E.R. ("Slow On the Bottle, Enjoy the Road") drinking-driving awareness campaign sponsored by the Council under contract with the Highway Traffic Safety Division, Department of Community Affairs.

Also covered will be the use of the two-part, "Teacher's Guide for Alcohol Education," for grades K - 6 and grades 7 - 12, jointly prepared by the Department of Institutions, Office of Public Instruction and the Montana Catholic Conference.

MCA has tentatively scheduled three to four hour mini-workshops on the "Alternative Action" Program for January 9 in Chinook, January 24 and February 12 in Helena. Major workshops similar in format to the Billings event have been tentatively set for February 26 - 28 in Great Falls, March 25 - 27 in Helena, April 22 - 24 in Missoula, and May 13 - 15 in Havre. Schedules may be adjusted to allow a greater number of persons to attend.

Teachers, school district personnel, MCA members and volunteers are invited to attend any workshop free of charge, except for the cost of materials. For additional information and registration forms, write or call MCA.

LOCAL COUNCIL WORKSHOPS PLANNED

MCA will be sponsoring a series of workshops on organizing and developing local alcoholism councils in communities throughout Montana early in the year.

The workshops will deal with the basic steps required to establish and expand a local council, including how to identify and mobilize volunteers and how to develop support within the community. Roles and responsibilities of local councils will be discussed, as well as board structuring and low-cost, effective alcoholism action projects and activities.

Watch The Monitor for scheduling information and more detailed descriptions of content for this series of workshops.

Yes, I would like to attend an MCA Workshop.
Please send an overview for the workshop indicated below.

Name _____ Phone _____ / _____
(home) (business)

Address _____
(street) (city) (state) (zip)

I am: MCA member _____ school employee _____ other _____

I wish to attend the _____ workshop on _____
(location/topic) (date)

Please send _____ additional registration forms.

Mail to: Montana Council on Alcoholism
616 Helena Ave., Suite 104
Helena, MT 59601

For more information call:
MCA - 442-5726

"ON BOARD!"

MCA welcomes two new staff members this November -- Nancie Floerchinger, our new executive secretary, and our new trainer, Ira Feiger.

A Minnesota native, Nancie Floerchinger graduated from high school in Conrad and has attended Montana State College in Bozeman and Modern Business College in Missoula. Nancie comes to the Council from Montana Foundation for Medical Care in Helena, and has previously worked as a legal secretary and as an administrative secretary in state government.

Ira Feiger, a native of New York City, earned his B.A. in psychology in 1970 from State University of New York at Plattsburgh, N.Y., and his M. Ed. in counseling in 1972 from Idaho State University at Pocatello, Idaho.

Previously a child volunteer specialist with Big Brothers and Sisters of Helena, Ira has also worked as a youth counselor and as a rehabiliation counselor with intellectually and emotionally disabled adults. He has specific experience in organizing and conducting workshops, and organized and worked with a drug-overdose crisis team at Idaho State.

Think Tank Planned

MCA is planning a "Think Tank on Alcoholism" to be scheduled sometime in July, 1980. The Think Tank will be a brainstorming session designed to generate ideas, projects, new goals, and directions for dealing with alcoholism and alcohol abuse, as well as a theme for Montana's 1980 Alcoholism Action Week.

Readers who are interested in participating in the Think Tank are urged to contact MCA or your local council with ideas and suggestions. Watch the Monitor for more information regarding this event.

VOLUNTEER CONSUMER MEMBERS NEEDED

MCA NEEDS MORE MEMBERS to accomplish the goals and objectives planned for 1980 and to increase voluntary citizen involvement in the alcoholism field. A broadly-based consumer constituency from communities all over Montana is vital to the Council for initiating action projects to meet local needs and for developing a credible statewide voice for alcoholism.

Consumer members of the Council may vote in the Annual General Membership Meeting to elect members to the Board of Trustees, and may participate in Quarterly Board Meetings, workshops and special training events. Backed by other members and the resources of the Council, members may serve as community resources for alcoholism and may provide the stimulus to initiate a variety of community projects and activities.

Complete the membership application form in this issue of MCA Monitor and mail it with dues for the appropriate category of membership. Your new membership will be valid for a full year from the date we receive your letter.

THE MCA BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND STATE OFFICE STAFF WISH ALL OUR READERS A SAFE AND HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON.

Membership Application

MONTANA COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM

616 Helena Ave. • Helena, Montana 59601 • (406) 442-5726

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Individual	
Student/Sr. Citizen	$ 5 ☐
Supporting	10 ☐
Contributing	25 ☐
Sustaining	50 ☐
Agency/Organization/Firm	
Supporting	$ 25 ☐
Contributing	50 ☐
Sustaining	100 ☐
Sustaining Donor	300 ☐

Dues Are Tax Deductable

Name _____
(Last) (First) (Middle) (Nick-Name)

Address _____
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip Code)

Occupation _____ With _____

Phone _____ / _____
(Home) (Business)

Affiliations _____

Are you interested in serving as a volunteer? Yes ☐ No ☐

Interests _____

Specific Concerns _____

Soft is the heart of a child

MCA has purchased a copy of the 30-minute film, "Soft is the Heart of a Child," produced by Operation Cork, a component of the Kroc Foundation in San Diego.

The film was previewed at the First MCA Annual General Meeting, October 19 in Billings, and was enthusiastically received by viewers, leaving few dry eyes in the house.

Picturing the alcoholic family from the eyes of a child, "Soft is the Heart" is a deeply emotional and realistic portrayal of the difficulties faced at home and at school by the children of alcoholic parents. Also covered are typical service resources which might be available in the community, as well as avenues by which the alcoholic parent might reach treatment services.

For more information on this film, contact the MCA State Office.

An Encouraging Word ——

National Council on Alcoholism Field Services Specialist Neil Scott of Bellevue, Washington, addressed the MCA Annual General Meeting, October 19 in Billings.

Scott noted that NCA, founded by Marty Mann in 1944, is the only national voluntary health agency in the field of alcoholism. NCA conducts its work through a national office in New York City, national component organizations, state affiliates such as MCA, and its largest force, local councils on alcoholism.

"We believe that our most important ingredient in conquering alcoholism is the human resource," -- Scott said, "the volunteer -- the army that is and must be mobilized to state the case for alcoholism." He said that NCA policy is established by a 93 member Board of Directors, elected by a Delegate Assembly which is representative of affilate councils located in 200 communities throughout the United States.

In discussing the disease concept of alcoholism, Scott noted that it was only twelve years ago that the AMA passed an official resolution stating "The American Medical Association identified alcoholism as a complex disease and as such recognizes that the medical components are medicine's responsibility."

"It has been a game of inches." Scott said, "an uphill battle with many obstacles to overcome. One of our biggest problems is our own silence and reluctance to break out of our own safe circles of fellowship . . . . There is still an often overwhelming stigma attached to the terms 'alcoholism' and 'alcoholics.' We need to develop innovative ways of letting people know that at least 10% of people who drink alcohol develop a progressive disease that can be successfully treated. They are not bad people -- nor are they hopeless as a result of their illness. We must let families know that they need treatment, and at the very least an understanding of alcoholism as a treatable disease -- and that they can do something for themselves and for the alcoholic as well -- even if the alcoholic is still drinking. Our message must overflow with love, courage and hope. We must also carry the message

(Continued on Page 5)

(Continued from Page 4)
that the bright side of alcoholism is recovery. That going into treatment is not the end of the world -- but in most cases it's the beginning of a new and exciting world of health, happiness and recovery."

Scott issued a challenge to recovering alcoholics: ". . . I am a solid believer in the 11th and 12th traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. The 12th tradition states that anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all tradition. Now, I am going to challenge recovering alcoholics who have at least a year of continuous sobriety to let people know that you are a recovering or recovered alcoholic, with no shame or guilt, but with pride in your growth and recovery. If you have occasion to address the media -- press, radio, TV or films -- I remind you that it is not a violation of the 11th tradition if you state publicly that you are a recovering alcoholic, as long as you do not mention Alcoholics Anonymous. An example of this was the 1976 Operation Understanding presented by NCA in Washington, D.C., where we presented 52 people to the world at a news conference, who unashamedly stated that they were recovering from the disease of alcoholism -- with no mention of A.A. membership. As a direct result of this, we have seen the emergence of an attitude change that made it easier for the public recovery of Betty Ford, Senator Talmadge, Joan Kennedy, Billy Carter, and others. This has had a real and dramatic impact on all America and has resulted in countless individuals entering recovery with the attitude that if Betty Ford can recognize alcoholism as a treatable illness and seek treatment, so can I."

Scott told of an encounter with the late Senator Hubert Humphrey: "After doing an interview with Sen. Humphrey, I asked him if he would record a public service announcement for the NCA affilate I was director of at the time. It was similar to one that Dick Van Dyke had just recorded. The Senator looked at the script and then said "If I do this -- and people hear it -- many will think I am a recovering alcoholic like Dick Van Dyke and others --." He hesitated for a moment, broke out with a grin and said, "Quite frankly, I would be flattered."

"In conclusion," Scott said, "I would like to commend the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous on its tremendous growth as it nears its 45th birthday. That growth was dramatically put into perspective recently in New York when Lois Wilson presented the two millionth copy of the Big Book to former Secretary of Health, Education & Welfare, Joseph Califano. She noted that it took 34 years to distribute the first million Big Books and only five more years to distribute the second million!"

ALCOHOLISM: THE UNMET NEED

Common or rare -- all disease can be devastating to those who suffer -- cardiovascular disease, diabetes, kidney disease, arthritis, epilepsy, cancer, hemophilia, muscular dystrophy, venereal disease, cystic fibrosis, retardation -- these diseases and others, nineteen in total, were ranked by estimated total cases for 1977 by the National Information Bureau, Inc.

Total estimated cases range upward from 25,000 hemophilics to 12,250,000 cases of cardiovascular disease. Alcoholism shares second place with mental illness at 10,000,000. We feel the alcoholism estimate is conservative.

NIB compiled some additional data addressing private support revenue (money) given in 1977 toward research, control and treatment of these diseases.

The data has some predictability. Some support levels were surprising. The range from the top down was first -- muscular distrophy, $173.12; second -- hemophilia, $140.00; fifth -- cancer, $66.71; tenth -- cardiovascular disease, $3.92; fifteenth -- mental illness, $1.23; ninteenth -- venereal disease, $.17. In summary, of private sector support in dollars, four disease categories exceeded $100, five others gleaned amounts between $66.71 and $24.79. Cardiovascular disease leads a group of six which range downward from $3.92 to $1.23 with the remaining four disease categories garnering less than $1 per case.

Where has this led us? Straight to the bottom line, or more correctly, the next to the bottom line -- ALCOHOLISM . . . $.30? Only venereal disease at $.17 per case ranks below. Sad but true, alcoholism really is "America's most neglected treatable disease."

A chart demostrating the facts discussed in this article is available from MCA.

Letters to the Editor

MCA Monitor welcomes letters and articles with the understanding that all submissions may be edited for length or form. Originals and photos cannot be returned.